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VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 14th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. MORRIS (Australia)
(Vice-Chairman)

later: Mr. RANA (Nepal)

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In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Morris (Australia), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

AGENDA ITEMS 45 TO 66 AND 155 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DISARMAMENT AGENDA ITEMS

Mr. SUTRESNA (Indonesia): I should like to begin by expressing my delegation's great satisfaction at seeing Mr. Rana presiding over our deliberations. We are happy that this session of the First Committee is chaired by an outstanding representative of a fraternal country, Nepal, with which Indonesia has always maintained cordial relations. Being aware of his vast experience in multilateral diplomacy, we are confident that under his chairmanship the Committee will produce substantive results. I also take this opportunity to extend my felicitations to the other members of the Bureau.

Before I proceed, it is a distinct honour and privilege for me to convey, through the kind intermediary of the Soviet delegation, our congratulations to President Mikhail Gorbachev on the unique honour conferred upon him as the winner of the 1990 Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of his manifold contributions to international harmony and co-operation.

The First Committee is meeting against the backdrop of some momentous changes in the world. The cold war is over. The continent of Europe has undergone a radical transformation during the past year as East-West relations have gone beyond the level of détente. The threat of bloc confrontation has receded, thus creating conditions for transformation within and between the two military and political alliances. The treaty on conventional armed forces in Europe, which has been tentatively agreed to, has set the stage for a meeting next month, when 34 nations will sign that historic document, thereby marking the beginning of a new security

(Mr. Sutresna, Indonesia)

order for Europe. In other regions as well, the perceptible movement towards the resolution of conflicts has heightened the prospects of armament reductions. It can therefore be said that arms limitation is finally starting to catch up with the political evolution that has been transforming the world order since last year.

Meanwhile, the ongoing negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union have also opened up possibilities of reducing their huge arsenals. We welcome in particular the agreement reached last June in the strategic arms reduction talks (START) on the framework of a treaty and look forward to its early completion and full implementation.

None the less, it bears reiteration that the acquisition of armaments, whether nuclear or conventional, has shown hardly any tangible sign of abatement. The undeniable reality is that weapons with incalculable consequences continue to be added to the arsenals of nations. Likewise, inexorable advances in research and development have led to new and more devastating weapons systems. It is indeed paradoxical that when conciliation, negotiation and co-operation have emerged as the hallmark of relations among States, and when the threat of nuclear confrontation has appreciably diminished, nuclear weapons are being continually refined and more weapons of mass destruction steadily accumulated. The challenge before us therefore is to adopt effective strategies and measures involving, inter alia, a clear definition of the stages of nuclear disarmament, the search for alternatives to reliance on nuclear weapons, and the conclusion of binding commitments by the nuclear States to refrain from the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. The second comprehensive study on nuclear weapons, conducted under the able and dedicated chairmanship of Ambassador Theorin of Sweden, has rightly called our attention to these and other pertinent aspects.

(Mr. Sutresna, Indonesia)

The convening of the Fourth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) provided a unique opportunity for a sober reassessment of the implementation of all the Treaty's provisions. Whereas the three previous review exercises were held under the shadow of super-Power rivalry and antagonism, the Fourth Review Conferemce was convened against the backdrop of a favourable international political climate. Moreover, as it also coincided with the twentieth year of the coming into force of the Treaty, it was the justifiable expectation of the parties that it could become a milestone on the road towards the cessation of the nuclear arms race, and nuclear disarmament.

However, to our dismay and disappointment, the participants failed to reach a consensus on that issue of global concern and proved unable to adopt a final document. At the Fourth Review Conference, therefore, Indonesia expressed the serious misgivings that it shared with other non-nuclear States over the selective application of the essential elements of the Treaty and the meagre progress made in the fulfilment of the commitments contained in article VI.

Proposals for deep cuts in existing arsenals in the context of pursuing the objectives of that article have recently been touted. It is worth while recalling in this context that at the First NPT Review Conference, held in 1975, the non-aligned countries, with foresight and vision, proposed a 50 per cent reduction of stockpiles. The rationale for that proposal has become even more compelling today. Such a reduction could be initiated through a mutually agreed moratorium on new weapons development and should be rapidly reinforced by formal agreements on weapons reduction. My delegation agrees that only through a bold and sweeping departure from the military postures and doctrines of the past can we go to the heart of the problem posed by the existence of nuclear weapons.

(Mr. Sutresna, Indonesia)

In sum, from the historical perspective it was heartening that the First and Third Review Conferences adopted Final Declarations, given the dismal failure of the Second and Fourth Review Conferences. Only time will show whether the non-proliferation Treaty will sustain its efficacy and attain its objectives or lapse into less and less relevance to the quest for non-proliferation, the promotion of peaceful uses of nuclear energy and the attainment of nuclear disarmament.

In seeking to de-escalate the nuclear arms race, the conclusion of a comprehensive test ban is of decisive importance. The preoccupation of the General Assembly with the qualitative aspects of nuclear armaments has been unequivocally pronounced by the adoption of more than 70 resolutions on a comprehensive test-ban treaty during the space of three decades.

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(Mr. Sutresna, Indonesia)

But neither the reaffirmations of adherence to existing treaty obligations nor the lengthy debates in various forums have had any discernable impact in attaining that goal. And because of its wide-ranging ramifications, the world has become increasingly aware that this long-pending issue has to be settled expeditiously and once and for all.

Indonesia is one of the initiators of the amendment Conference for the partial test-ban Treaty which is scheduled to be held next January and to which we attach great importance, as it would constitute a truly historic occasion in which for the first time all parties to a nuclear arms-limitation treaty will participate in the negotiations for ending nuclear-weapons testing. The Conference also offers an unparalleled opportunity to complement the advances being made in bilateral negotiations and in other forums. My delegation would expect that these will be nurtured and built upon, to enable us to move forward with a sense of urgency and responsibility.

During the past three decades there has been sustained interest in the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, on the initiative and through the efforts of the concerned countries. These zones offer a particularly viable alternative in order to ensure the complete absence of nuclear weapons and guarantees of non-use of such weapons. The peaceful uses of nuclear energy can also be promoted within the zones. At the heart of the approach is the firm conviction that regional co-operation will have a positive influence on security, induce restraint in armaments, and mitigate regionally sourced arms races.

In the context of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), the promotion of regional political, economic and cultural co-operation has been emphasized, rather than the military aspect, as a basis for security. Thus, members of ASEAN have contained the growth of their military establishments by promoting cohesion through mechanisms for collective responses to conflicting

(Mr. Sutresna, Indonesia)

pressures. At the summit meeting held in December 1987, ASEAN Heads of State or Government called for intensified efforts to ensure the early establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South-East Asia. Such a zone is particularly desirable in that region, which has a long history of endemic conflict and instability. The final stretch of the process towards a comprehensive settlement of the Cambodian conflict offers a unique opportunity for ASEAN and other countries in the region to redouble their endeavours for the early establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone as an essential component of a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality. Despite these compelling reasons and the strong desire of the countries of the region, the creation of such a zone has encountered formidable obstacles. We hope that the States concerned will eschew narrow national interests and facilitate its establishment by undertaking the necessary measures and commitments to ensure its effectiveness.

With regard to the work of the Disarmament Commission, if I may be permitted to say so from my vantage point as Chairman of that body, there was an overriding determination to complete the task with regard to the items before it. For instance, the Contact Group on nuclear issues agreed on a number of recommendations containing a carefully balanced package. While an agreement on a complete set of recommendations proved elusive, still the partial success is encouraging for further consideration in other forums. Similarly, the adoption of proposals to strengthen further the role of the United Nations on disarmament issues reflected the importance of the multilateral process. In the field of conventional armaments, the Commission identified a number of specific issues and possible measures that would contribute to the ultimate objective of general and complete disarmament under international control.

A significant achievement was the adoption of the document concerning ways and means to enhance the functioning of the Disarmament Commission. That agreement,

(Mr. Sutresna, Indonesia)

which was the culmination of experience gained since 1979, has provided a solid basis on which to improve the efficiency and efficacy of the Commission. The Commission will henceforth have a limited working agenda of four items for in-depth consideration and no subject would, in principle, be maintained for more then three consecutive years. In that regard, it was recognized that the selection of items is of crucial importance and that during the current session of the First Committee delegations should continue consultations on the question of a working agenda for 1991.

It is indeed gratifying to note that the Disarmament Commission, being a deliberative body, has proved its utility in defining and elaborating various issues since its reconstitution and has thus prepared the ground for subsequent negotiations. In line with this approach, it could also assist the General Assembly in making its own assessment of the status of various agreements and treaties that have already been reached and of improvements that are necessary. And it can clarify a number of issues that at present cloud the endeavours that are being made either bilaterally, regionally or globally to achieve the goals stipulated in the Final Document.

Many speakers have made positive comments about the results that were achieved by the Disarmament Commission during its substantive session in May this year. I am grateful for that, but the credit goes to the whole membership, including all the political groups and chairmen of the subsidiary bodies, without whose co-operation, support and understanding it would not have been possible to reach the stage we are at today. Our appreciation should also be extended to the Secretariat staff, in particular to Mr. Lin, Secretary of the Disarmament Commission.

(Mr. Sutresna, Indonesia)

My delegation welcomes the report by the group of experts on the role of the United Nations in the field of verification. It is a timely contribution in the context of prospects for progress on arms limitation and disarmament agreements. Although our collective experience in this field is limited, a number of co-operative measures have already been concluded in some existing treaties, or are under consideration for future treaties. My delegation is heartened that the report has affirmed that the form and modalities of verification in any specific agreement should depend upon the purposes, scope and nature of the agreement, and provide for the participation of all parties directly or through the United Nations.

In this regard, the report has considered a number of relevant factors, including, inter alia, the criteria for workable standards for verification, and the problems and prospects for internationalizing the verification process in both scope and participation, as well as its legal, technological and financial implications. We believe that the approaches contained in the report deserve our full consideration. We endorse in particular the conclusion that the Organization, through an evolutionary process, should be accorded an appropriate role in the verification process as a whole. Such an objective can be attained through the creation of a data base under the auspices of the United Nations as an essential component of a verification mechanism.

In addition, it would also be necessary to determine initially the institutional framework - whether we are going to have separate arrangements for each agreement, such as a comprehensive nuclear-test ban or chemical-weapons ban, or one comprehensive organization within which various provisions, procedures and techniques could be developed and maintained. It is also essential in this context to consider a role for the International Atomic Energy Agency, which has acquired valuable experience through an extensive system of inspection. To the extent relevant, that experience might be of use in connection with the verification of

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future arms-limitation agreements. Of equal importance is the question of participation, especially of States which do not have adequate technical capabilities and whose role and responsibility should be on the basis of the principle of non-discrimination.

Indonesia's particular concern over the continuing build-up of naval armaments and the rapid development of new naval weapon systems is well known and should be well understood, given my country's specific geographic and geostrategic configurations.

(Mr. Sutresna, Indonesia)

My delegation is therefore gratified that substantive consideration of the naval dimension of the global arms race in all its ramifications has been initiated. The ongoing efforts have until now focused on nuclear and conventional armaments, encompassing land and air forces. However, the interdependence of land, air and naval forces has called attention to the need to widen the negotiations to include naval forces.

A wide range of possible measures and avenues of action that could be the subject of negotiations in appropriate forums has already been identified. We should, in particular, pursue the objective of multilateral agreements on the questions of short- and medium-range sea-borne nuclear weapons, prevention of incidents on and over the high seas, modernizing the existing laws of sea warfare, safety guidelines for sea-borne nuclear reactors, rights of non-belligerent and neutral States and openness and transparency on naval matters, and a host of others. Finally, my delegation believes that the resolute pursuit of confidence-building measures would constitute a solid foundation for the consideration of significant reductions in conventional and nuclear naval armaments and armed forces.

Ever since the adoption of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, my Government has been aware of the potential benefits its implementation would bring for the littoral and hinterland States as well as for external Powers. Considering its strategic location and the dynamics flowing from a multitude of regional and extraregional factors, the importance of maintaining peace and stability in the Indian Ocean is self-evident. The fact that its littoral and hinterland area is overwhelmingly composed of newly independent and non-aligned States eager to harness their abundant resources for development adds poignancy to the question of zonal peace. The complex ramifications of the problems involved and the differing perceptions of them can be addressed comprehensively only through

(Mr. Sutresna, Indonesia)

the long-pending international Conference on the Indian Ocean. Indonesia and other non-aligned States remain fully committed to its being convened in 1992, and we appeal to the major maritime users and the permanent members of the Security Council to extend their co-operation.

Turning now to non-nuclear issues, the specific characteristics of chemical weapons and the magnitude of their destructive effects, as vividly demonstrated in recent conflict situations, have long reinforced my Government's conviction that the most viable instrument for totally banning these abhorrent weapons would be a comprehensive and verifiable convention with universal adherence. One of the main problems faced by the Conference on Disarmament at the moment is the inclusion of provisions that will ensure the total destruction of existing arsenals. Hence, the interests of States which do not possess chemical weapons will have to be safeguarded through a system of sanctions, assistance and protection against their use, as well as through economic and technological co-operation in the peaceful use of chemicals. It is regrettable that, despite the earnest hope of many States for the early conclusion of the convention, the work of the Conference on Disarmament this year fell short of expectations. My delegation therefore hopes that negotiations will be reinforced by a sense of increased vigour and greater political will, particularly on the part of States possessing the largest arsenals of chemical weapons.

Indonesia shares the concern of other members over the accumulation of conventional armaments in many regions, which has had a severe impact on the global economy. New technologies have also greatly changed our understanding of these armaments. The greater sophistication of these weapons has rendered heretofore invulnerable defences totally unprotected. Their costs have become astronomical, while the pressure to acquire them is all too evident.

(Mr. Sutresna, Indonesia)

In this context, the transfer of weapons to areas of tension has negatively affected the prospects of peace and security and strengthened the forces opposed to disarmament. It should also be recognized that transfers rendered possible as a result of specific agreements in one region equally hamper attainment of the objective of disarmament. Hence, the issue of transfers of arms should be addressed in conjunction with the question of reducing tension, enhancing confidence and promoting peaceful settlement. Other factors relevant to the complexity of the problem include intraregional competition in the military field, as well as matters of political and strategic importance to the major military and supplier countries. All this illustrates some of the interweaving factors that complicate the prospects for restraint on arms transfers and call attention to the multidimensional nature of the problems involved. Indonesia believes that through the mechanism of regional consultative forums on security and disarmament and through other appropriate modalities the international community can resolve the dilemmas attendant upon the question of arms transfers.

In conclusion, we now have a rare opportunity to shed, in two generations, the burdens of militarization and over-armament. The time has come for the competition in armaments to be replaced by the pursuit of common security, with the promise of a safer and more prosperous future for all mankind. The path towards attaining these objectives is through productive multilateral negotiations based on the immutable principles of equality, reciprocity and the equal obligations and responsibilities of all States. Yet there has been no movement away from the bilateralization of disarmament negotiations on important and urgent questions, especially with regard to nuclear arms. It is therefore essential to reaffirm the central role and primary responsibility of the United Nations in disarmament and the effectiveness of the machinery and procedures of the multilateral process.

Mr. TUN (Myanmar): I wish to begin by conveying to the Chairman my delegation's warm congratulations on his assumption of that post. My delegation is doubly pleased to do so since we are familiar with the outstanding diplomatic skills he has so amply demonstrated in the United Nations and since he represents a peaceful country to which my own, Myanmar, is bound by strong ties of culture and friendship. Our congratulations go also to other officers of the Committee on their well-deserved election. I assure the Chairman of the Myanmar delegation's full support as he carries out his important responsibilities.

I take this opportunity to express our deep appreciation to the Chairman of the Committee at the forty-fourth session, Ambassador Taylhardat of Venezuela, for the most skilful manner in which he guided the work of the Committee last year. I should also like to express the gratitude of the Myanmar delegation to Under-Secretary-General Yasushi Akashi and his able team for the excellent job they continue to do in the Department for Disarmament Affairs.

We are gathered here at a time of phenomenal transformations in international relations. As we look back over the past 12 months we can see extraordinary political developments, which have unfolded at a pace none of us could have imagined only a few years ago. The consolidation of the qualitative change in the relationship between the two super-Powers and between the two major alliances in the past year has brought the world to the threshold of a new era in which political and security needs will be vastly different from those of the period of the cold war. As the Chairman of my delegation put it in his statement in the General Assembly,

(Mr. Tun, Myanmar)

"Ideological barriers which had once generateed a deep-seated adversary psychosis and which had long bedevilled relations among States have virtually disappeared. These have given way to new attitudes and perceptions, resulting in a new pattern of relationship that has moved beyond the stage of a mere relaxation of tension to a stage of active co-operation and partnership." (A/45/PV.26, p. 3)

(Mr. Tun, Myanmar)

Even as we welcome the dramatic changes taking place around us and look forward to the dawn of a new era of peace and security, our hopes must be tempered by the fact that the changes have not been uniformly positive. The ominous clouds of war casting long shadows over the Gulf region only serve to remind us that it is not the end of the cold war alone that can assure us of a more peaceful, just and secure international order.

As we stand on the threshold of a new era, an optimistic view can be maintained only when we know that justice will prevail and when the needs of the international community as a whole are fully addressed. That is why the high level of understanding and farsightedness displayed by the global Powers, commendable though it may be, is not in itself sufficient to resolve outstanding conflicts and to promote development. It must be accompanied by genuine efforts to ensure that the gap between the North and the South does not become even wider as the East-West divide narrows. The stability of the international order will greatly depend on whether the glaring economic gap between the rich and the poor will be allowed to remain. More equitable and efficient economic relations among the nations of the world will surely reinforce the peace and stability we hope to achieve through disarmament. Now that the initial steps towards disarmament have been taken, we feel that the resources thus released could be gainfully used to alleviate the plight of the developing countries.

A noteworthy aspect of the fast-evolving international political situation is the emergence of a collegial spirit among the permanent members of the Security Council, which has significantly enhanced its effective functioning. While my delegation welcomes this development, we feel the world must pay heed to the caution sounded by the Secretary-General in his latest report on the work of the Organization:

(Mr. Tun, Myanmar)

"... agreement among the major Powers must carry with it the support of a majority of Member States if it is to make the desired impact on the world situation. It is the willing endorsement of the decisions of the Security Council by the international community that can best counter any impression, likely to create anxiety, of world affairs being run by a directorate". (A/45/1, p. 13)

The growing momentum of trust and confidence generated by the positive and profound changes in the relationship between the two militarily most significant States, coupled with the demise of blocs, have opened new possibilities for disarmament. At such a propitious time, disarmament questions that have so far defied solution need to be tackled urgently so as to ensure that disarmament, détente and development, which interact, will become a self-generating process. We must continue to seek measures to prevent armament, measures to limit armament, and measures of disarmament at every level, global, regional and subregional. These measures must include the whole disarmament spectrum, from nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction to conventional arms.

There is universal recognition of the fact that nuclear weapons pose the greatest danger to the survival of mankind and that their limitation, reduction and ultimate elimination must remain at the top of the disarmament agenda.

My delegation therefore welcomes the fact that the United States and the Soviet Union in implementing the 1987 Treaty on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - the INF Treaty - have actually reduced their nuclear arsenals. At the same time we cannot lose sight of the fact that intermediate-range nuclear missiles represent only the tip of the iceberg, and that much more needs to be done to eliminate large stockpiles of strategic nuclear weapons remaining in their arsenals. Mankind's goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world is now moving into the realm of the possible, and we encourage all concerned to

(Mr. Tun, Myanmar)

redouble their efforts to achieve it. In that regard we note with satisfaction the very positive statement of Presidents Bush and Gorbachev made at the end of their recent Washington summit, assuring the world that the objectives of the future negotiations on strategic offensive arms will be to reduce further the risk of outbreak of war, particularly nuclear war, and to ensure strategic stability, transparency and predictability through further stabilizing reductions in the strategic arsenals of both countries.

We look forward to the signing of the forthcoming treaty under the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START), and hope that further steps will be taken to reduce and eliminate other categories of nuclear weapons not covered by the START régime. We also hope that as progressive cuts are made in the nuclear arsenals of the two super-Powers, the remaining nuclear-weapon States will associate themselves with the process of halting and reversing the nuclear-arms race.

The achievement of a comprehensive test ban remains a primary objective of the international community. Despite this and despite the upturn in the international political climate, there has been no let-up in the qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons. We find it beyond reason to condone continued testing, particularly at a time when first steps are actually being taken to eliminate nuclear weapons and when the threat of other States crossing the nuclear threshold is growing. We firmly believe that a comprehensive nuclear-test ban would contribute significantly to the aim of halting and reversing the nuclear-arms race and achieving nuclear disarmament.

We are therefore concerned by the continued nuclear tests in the South Pacific against the wishes of the peoples of that region, a region which has declared itself nuclear-free.

(Mr. Tun, Myanmar)

The urgency of achieving a comprehensive test ban and the dangers inherent in continuing nuclear tests were dramatically highlighted by Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze in his statement to the General Assembly on 25 September, when he said:

"As a matter of utmost urgency, nuclear tests have to be stopped. If testing is stopped, we have a chance to survive; otherwise the world will perish." (A/45/PV.6, p. 53)

As set out in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, the Conference on Disarmament, as the single multilateral negotiating forum on such issues, must be accorded a primary role in negotiations on a nuclear-test ban. We therefore welcome with deep satisfaction the re-establishment in July, after seven years of stalemate, of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear-Test Ban. We are convinced that currently available verification techniques, both national and international, are sufficient to support the comprehensive test-ban treaty we envisage.

Our preoccupation with nuclear weapons should not deflect our attention from chemical weapons, another class of mass-destruction weapons whose total and comprehensive banning cannot and must not be delayed any further. My delegation, representing a country that is unequivocally committed to the achievement of such a ban, a country that neither possesses such weapons nor has the intention of acquiring them, took heart at the significant progress achieved last year at various international forums towards agreement on a chemical weapons convention. It is a matter for regret that the expectations and optimism of last year have given way to frustration.

We welcome the United States-Soviet agreement of 1 June, which complements last December's Wyoming agreement and which provides not only for the destruction

(Mr. Tun, Myanmar)

of the bulk of their chemical-weapon stocks but also for cessation of the production of such weapons.

Important and welcome as those agreements are, our goal of a universal and comprehensive convention on the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons and on their destruction can only be achieved through multilateral negotiations. The Conference on Disarmament, the single multilateral forum for disarmament negotiations, has already done extensive work on all aspects of a draft convention and has identified all principal issues that need to be addressed.

(Mr. Tun, Myanmar)

We would strongly urge those States that have taken positions that militate against achieving a comprehensive, non-discriminatory and effectively verifiable convention to reconsider their positions so that the Conference can now move forward expeditiously towards achieving its objectives at an early date.

The primacy of nuclear weapons should not distract us from the search for meaningful limitation measures in the field of conventional arms. While weapons of mass destruction, particularly those using uncontrolled nuclear and thermonuclear reaction for their destructive power, are the ones whose use would bring about the extinction of the human race, it is conventional armaments that pose an everyday threat to the security of States, especially the smaller ones, in various parts of the world. The events of 2 August in the Gulf and the subsequent build-up of massive opposing forces in the region starkly illustrate this danger. The danger of such arms has been realized by the States of Europe, where arms control is finally starting to catch up with the political revolution that has transformed that continent. The positive outcome of the negotiations on conventional forces in Europe will no doubt result in a stable and secure balance at a lower level of conventional forces in Europe. It is our earnest hope and expectation that those multilateral efforts and unilateral initiatives will be emulated by States in other regions of the world where the need to reduce massive conventional armouries is no less acute.

The massive build-up of conventional weapons far beyond the legitimate needs of self-defence that is being relentlessly pursued by some countries is causing growing concern and exerting a destabilizing effect in various regions. The matter deserves serious consideration.

The spirit of conciliation prevailing in the world has resulted in the enhancement of the United Nations role. This, in turn, has provided a fresh

(Mr. Tun, Myanmar)

impetus to the disarmament machinery within the framework of the Organization. In the past year the United Nations Disarmament Commission has achieved commendable success, due largely to the recent rationalization of its work. The Commission was able to finalize recommendations on four agenda items thanks to the leadership provided by Ambassador Nana Sutresna of Indonesia. My delegation wishes to express its deep appreciation to him.

As we stand at the crossroads of a new and promising era of co-operation and partnership the possibility of achieving disarmament has never been greater. We must ensure that the momentum created in the past year will be maintained in the years ahead.

Mr. PITARKA (Albania): On behalf of the delegation of the People's Socialist Republic of Albania I should like to address to the Chairman our warm congratulations upon his election to preside over the First Committee and to wish him and the Bureau further successes in guiding its deliberations.

Again this year the agenda of the First Committee includes a wide range of issues, from general nuclear and conventional disarmament to the problems of regional disarmament. The diversity of issues on our agenda clearly testifies to the ever-mounting and continuous concern of the international community over the arms race, and to its ongoing demand that the concerns of the peoples for international security be addressed. We are all witnesses to the fact that for a very long time the problems of disarmament have been deadlocked. Instead of enjoying any real steps towards disarmament, the world has continued to face confrontation, which has expressed itself in the intensification and the quantitative and qualitative escalation of the arms race. Those processes have led to the creation of great nuclear and conventional potentials on our planet.

(Mr. Pitarka, Albania)

The present session of the United Nations General Assembly is being held against the background of some positive and encouraging developments in the international situation, although various political, ideological, economic and social conflicts still persist, and the factors and causes that created them have not been eliminated. That is why a constructive and objective consideration of the problems of disarmament requires special attention so that further impetus may be given to positive trends and contradictory problems may be challenged in order that we may avoid the dangers that threaten peace and general security.

We are of the opinion that the question of disarmament is confronted at present with great and complex challenges such as the reduction and complete elimination of all nuclear weapons, the reduction of conventional weapons, the prevention of the proliferation of the arms race into outer space, the signing of the convention on chemical weapons, naval disarmament, and so on.

The cessation of the nuclear-arms race and the achievement of real nuclear disarmament has always had primacy in the deliberations of our Committee, of the General Assembly and of many other multilateral agencies. At the same time they have had priority in many bilateral or multilateral regional negotiations. That is because the international community feels ever-increasing concern at the tremendous menace those weapons pose to international peace and security and to the very existence of our planet. It is now widely recognized that the peoples of the world cannot be free from anxiety so long as huge nuclear arsenals exist and so long as new programmes for their further sophistication continue. At the same time it has now become imperative for the international community to persevere even more to ensure the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. Each of us is fully aware that

(Mr. Pitarka, Albania)

the acquisition of nuclear weapons by additional States would be as dangerous as the continuation of the nuclear-arms race among the nuclear-weapon States.

The international community has appreciated and welcomed the signing and the initial progress made in the implementation of the Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Limitation of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles, the INF Treaty. It is likewise encouraging the ongoing dialogue between the United States and the Soviet Union to make further advances towards deeper cuts in their nuclear arsenals. It is the wish of the peoples and peace-loving countries that those negotiations, and those between the two military and political alliances in Europe in the field of disarmament, may provide real and substantive results.

Although it is far from our intention to discount the significance of the steps taken so far, we are of the opinion that there is still a long way to go before we reach the long-sought goal of the international community that the process of nuclear disarmament become irreversible. We therefore hold the view that the two super-Powers, the United States and the Soviet Union, which possess the largest nuclear arsenals, bear special responsibilities and therefore should be the first to take the lead in efforts towards the elimination and cessation of the nuclear-arms race as well as the final destruction of such weapons. The Albanian delegation shares the view expressed by the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, in his report on the work of the Organization, when he states that the process of deeper cuts in the strategic arsenals of the two super-Powers:

> "should eventually be expanded to incorporate all other types of nuclear weapons, including those of the other nuclear-weapon States." (A/45/1, p. 18)

(Mr. Pitarka, Albania)

The People's Socialist Republic of Albania has given and continues to give particular attention to the cessation of the nuclear-arms race, thereby expressing its lofty commitment to international peace and security. Guided by that concern and aspiration, the Albanian Government has become a Party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and has thus expressed its own commitment to making a real contribution to efforts to make that Treaty a genuine, universal and effective instrument to ensure the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and to proceed towards their total elimination.

(Mr. Pitarka, Albania)

Within the framework of efforts to achieve general and complete disarmament conventional disarmament has always occupied a special place. It is well known that almost 80 per cent of global military expenditures go to conventional armament, and even more tragic is the fact that since the Second World War more than 20 million people have been killed in conflicts and wars waged with conventional weapons. Furthermore, the economies of many developing countries are being drained of huge resources because of their purchases of sophisticated conventional weapons and armaments, while the arms-supplying countries are deriving ever-greater profits from the sale of such weapons.

We are actually faced with a dangerous phenomenon in the field of conventional armaments, namely, the application of scientific and technological achievements to the development of conventional weaponry. The qualitative improvement in conventional weapons and the creation of a new generation of such weaponry is leading to a new and spiralling acceleration of the arms race. It is, of course, quite logical to say that nothing is achieved by the destruction of some weapons if existing arsenals of conventional weapons are qualitatively improved. We therefore believe that it is high time to give serious consideration to the qualitative aspect of the conventional arms race, for the stockpiling of such weapons, along with their sophistication, is leading to a further shrinking of the demarcation line between nuclear and conventional weapons as regards their dangerous consequences.

At the Paris Conference on chemical weapons held in January 1989 the participating States issued a unanimous call for the conclusion, as soon as possible, of an agreement on a convention for the complete prohibition of the development, production, stockpiling, transfer and use of chemical weapons and for their thorough destruction. Since then, continuous efforts have been made by the international community in various international forums to achieve that objective.

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However, despite such efforts there still remain many complex problems that impede the conclusion of the convention and the attainment of its fundamental objective, namely, the complete prohibition and destruction of chemical weapons. Another disturbing factor is the indication that various Powers are not only continuing to produce and stockpile chemical weapons but to work towards their further sophistication as well. It is therefore imperative and timely to consolidate the joint endeavours and political good will of the international community to achieve the final destruction of that category of deadly weapons.

Europe is the continent with the largest stockpiles of both nuclear and conventional weapons. For a long time that fact, coupled with the political and ideological confrontation, forced that continent to bear a heavy military, economic, social and psychological burden. Europe therefore welcomes the efforts being made by the European countries to overcome that situation. The proposals made within the framework of the negotiations on conventional forces in Europe have created a context in which the heavy military burden upon the continent may be eased. The negotiations on measures to strengthen security and co-operation in Europe, the so-called Helsinki process, constitute another step towards that goal. We consider that process to be of special importance, and we have therefore joined it and have participated in a number of activities with the clear intention of marching on in that direction.

In the efforts being made to carry out the lofty task of safeguarding and strengthening international peace and security the United Nations has become a prominent forum in which all Member States, large or small and from every region and continent, make their contribution to the process of ending the arms race and avoiding the dangers created by the intensification of the arms race. The very fact that almost one fourth of the resolutions adopted each year by the General

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Assembly deal with disarmament issues clearly proves the deep and long-standing concern of our Organization for those issues. It also reflects another fact, namely, that the United Nations should be in the forefront of endeavours being made in this field, endeavours that would produce positive results if the international community were to increase still further its own efforts within the Organization to push ahead with new and encouraging processes for easing regional tensions, solving disputes in a peaceful manner and bolstering confidence-building measures in all regions where hotbeds of tension and conflict still exist.

Notwithstanding all those initiatives, from long historic experience we cannot fail to see that disarmament is not merely a question of resolutions, conventions or treaties to be concluded. In fact, there has been an abundance of them. The main problem is how to turn them into effective measures that can lead us to real disarmament, measures that are implemented through the elimination of nuclear, conventional and chemical weapons. Such measures should enable us to avoid the dangers of local wars and conflicts and lead to the consolidation of the rule of law and order in international relations through the principle of the non-use of force.

Through the joint efforts of the international community conditions would be created that could lead to streamlining the colossal expenditures being made to produce and sell means of mass destruction and our planet Earth could thus be spared the catastrophe of its own destruction.

In conclusion, I should like to state that the Albanian delegation will spare no effort in making its contribution to this rather complex process, which is vital for the destiny and the present and future of mankind.

Mrs. MANTILLA (Ecuador)(interpretation from Spanish): I should like first to congratulate the Chairman on his election to preside over the First

(Mrs. Mantilla, Ecuador)

Committee. His diplomatic skills and well-known experience augur well for the success of our work. I should also like to congratulate the other officers of the Committee and members of the Secretariat.

In the course of the general debate at the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly last year we referred to the dynamic changes that were occurring in the international arena and that were being reported daily in the world press. All of us, with well-founded optimism, foresaw the emergence of a world that would offer better opportunties for people of good will to work together towards agreement.

Today, we note with profound satisfaction that those positive trends have grown stronger and have begun to bear fruit. In describing the new stage in international relations, it is said, first, that the cold war is over and that we are now in the post-cold-war era. Such a statement has manifold and profound implications. Now that an end has been put to the cold war, doors have been opened to universal democratization, to the promotion and respect of fundamental freedoms and human rights and to the establishment of international justice. In other words, the goals the United Nations set for itself when it was founded in 1945 are now more attainable.

Secondly, it has been noted that the best way to achieve those goals is through dialogue and common enterprise. In that connection respect for the rule of law assumes paramount importance. We all want to live in peace and to achieve progress in solidarity. We are aware of the anachronism of personal and national egoism. Solidarity brings us together and makes us one.

(Mrs. Mantilla, Ecuador)

Peace implies the total abolition of the illegal use of force and the affirmation of shared progress. In his report on the external debt crisis and development the personal representative of the Secretary-General stated that in coming years the four enemies of development - which is the new name for peace - will be war, poverty, indebtedness and the destruction of the environment, all of which are closely related.

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In the specific area with which we deal in this Committee, we would point out that, with the end of the cold war, its causes and its consequences should disappear and the first among them the mistrust and mutual misgivings, the accumulation of weapons, the fierce competition - in short, the arms race. We must not be so naive as to think that there are not still dangers for which we must be prepared, but we must acknowledge that many of the conflicts of the past have been the product of mutual distrust and of an erroneous policy of seeking security through the amassing of weapons.

Having eliminated this negative political position, it is now necessary to re-define the scope and the mechanisms of international security, and move forward, dynamically and decisively, along the path of disarmament. Steps have been taken along this line, particularly bilaterally, but it is indispensable that this progress in negotiations between the two super-Powers be reflected multilaterally.*

We are all interested in stopping and reversing the accumulation of nuclear weapons with a view to eliminating them completely. Although the Fourth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which was held in Geneva, did not conclude its work with the adoption of a Final Document, none the less it provided an opportunity for a productive debate on fundamental aspects of the non-proliferation Treaty, with reference, for example, to its functioning, criteria on safeguards and security guarantees, and the preparation of the conference on its extension that is to be held in 1995.

The non-proliferation Treaty is gaining strength with the adherence of new States. The intention of some Governments of those which have adhered to the Treaty, or have announced their intention to do so, is to be commended. The Treaty

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* The Chairman returned to the Chair.

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has contributed to the prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons and has promoted the use of nuclear energy for exclusively peaceful purposes.

The complete prohibition of nuclear testing has always been closely related to a complete ban on nuclear testing. The role of these tests in the quantitative and qualitative development of nuclear arsenals is well known. What is more, its negative impact on the general development of all peoples and on the protection of the environment cannot be denied. In the new era of universal tolerance and understanding, the continuation of nuclear tests is becoming increasingly incomprehensible, absurd and worthy of condemnation. I must recall in this connection the unswerving position taken by the States members of the South-Pacific Commission, which have protested nuclear testing in the Pacific Ocean.

The preparation of a treaty totally banning nuclear testing must be a priority for the international community. In accordance with this principle, several countries have promoted the convening of a conference to amend the partial test-ban Treaty. This praiseworthy initiative has encountered many procedural obstacles, which must be overcome. The Conference, for which a preparatory meeting was held in the middle of this year, will hold its substantive session in January in New York. We hope, and indeed appeal to all countries, particularly those that have nuclear arsenals, to act in such a way that the political will in favour of peace - repeatedly expressed by their leaders and strengthened by demonstrations in support of such a policy - will permit full success of the January conference. We further believe that the Ad Hoc Committee which was re-established this year in the Conference on Disarmament can gain in efficiency and make progress in the analyses and negotiations on this subject.

In the course of 1989, meetings on chemical weapons were held in Paris and Canberra - a topic regarding which the international community has welcomed the agreements entered into by the United States and the Soviet Union. The Paris

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Conference reaffirmed the need to speed up the work of the Conference on Disarmament and invited all States that had not yet done so to ratify the Geneva Protocol of 1925.

During the meeting of the Heads of State of the United States and the Soviet Union held in Washington this year, an agreement was entered into on the destruction and non-production of chemical weapons. It also included additional measures to facilitate a multilateral convention on the production of such weapons. Progress must be made in the multilateral negotiations to conclude a convention on the prohibition of the production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons and on their destruction.

In order to achieve all such goals, we must count on the unequivocal will of the countries that produce, purchase and sell weapons and on the ability of the United Nations to take action in this regard.

Arms transfers not only have an impact on peace and on the disturbance of peace, but also on development and the elimination of development. We must think about a new concept of international security, one that cannot be based on the proliferation of wars but rather on the highest ethical and legal order. In order to achieve that goal it is necessary to proceed to strengthen law and constantly reinvigorate our Organization. At the same time, we must promote confidence-building measures among States and nations. Concurrently, practical measures must be adopted, including a registry of the transfer of conventional arms.

In this connection, my delegation agrees with the proposals put forward in the memorandum by the Soviet Union entitled "The United Nations in the post-confrontation world" (A/45/626).

In conclusion, I wish to refer to the fact that we must find better and more effective ways to deal with disarmament topics in all of the relevant bodies of the Organization. The Disarmament Commission, in an effort at rationalization, did

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encouraging work at its session in May. Now, the First Committee must supplement those efforts. Accordingly, we welcome the Chairman's initiative to hold open-ended meetings with a view to enhancing the efficiency of our work. This rationalization should first and foremost consider the possibility of action within the United Nations and within the international context and taking advantage of the good climate in the international sphere in order to advance the work on general and complete disarmament.

Today we are celebrating another anniversary of the United Nations. We are doing so in a positive atmosphere - one that is not devoid of problems or dangers but one in which the widely held will of the international community is to promote respect for law and peace. I should like to express the hope that this Committee, which deals with such important topics so closely related to world peace, may be able to make its best, most effective and realistic contribution for the good of mankind.

Mr. OKEYO (Kenya): It gives me pleasure to join other speakers who preceded me, in conveying to you, Sir, my delegation's warm congratulations on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. My delegation is encouraged and reassured to see you - a representative of Nepal and a friendly fellow non-aligned country with which Kenya shares a common experience of commitment to peace and concrete contribution to United Nations peace-keeping efforts - preside over our deliberations. The critical role you played at this year's session of the Disarmament Commission in leading the decade-old deliberations on racist South Africa's nuclear capability to a successful conclusion, is still vivid in our memories. In congratulating you and the other officers of the Committee, I wish to seize this opportunity to assure you of the full co-operation and total support of the Kenya delegation.

(Mr. Okeyo, Kenya)

The current session of the General Assembly offers an opportunity for the international community as a whole to take stock of and reflect collectively on the dramatic developments that have taken place in the world in recent years. Largely as a result of these historic changes, the world has now entered a new international geopolitical era, a period which, in the words of the Secretary-General,

"... wears both the aspect of hope and the countenance of dangerous unrestraint". (A/45/1, p. 2)

The end of the cold war and the improved East-West relations have revealed the inherent fragility and futility of narrow systems of security based on the military factor alone. They have also revealed that any obsession with military security results in a self-perpetuating arms race. It distorts priorities, it hampers social and economic progress, and it constrains political dialogue. It affects the institutions of States to their long-term detriment and aggravates the sense of insecurity in all nations. The post-cold-war era thus presents possibilities and opportunities for the world finally to put into effect the system of security envisaged in the Charter, based on such legal and political pillars as the non-use of force, the peaceful settlement of disputes and collective action to maintain international peace and security.

Kenya remains firmly convinced that security based on the obsolete deterrence theory and on constant acquisition of sophisticated weapons cannot guarantee permanent peace and, as modern history has frequently and tragically demonstrated, the proliferation of armaments often end in war and suffering for millions of people. In this age of mass-destruction weapons, especially nuclear weapons, the dangers are even more ghastly, as mankind's very survival is in jeopardy. To

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eliminate this threat therefore requires, first, abandoning concepts of security that contemplate rationalizing, or attempt to rationalize, the use of weapons of mass destruction and, secondly, moving towards concrete measures of disarmament - not just arms limitations.

The current crisis in the Gulf region demonstrates that in view of the devastating nature of armaments in existence today in the hands of both small and big Powers, security can be neither fragmented nor viewed in an unlimited regional Eurocentric or bilateral context alone, but should be tackled on a wider scale and with a genuine multilateral approach that can ensure world peace and security. That is why Kenya strongly regrets the recent failure of the Fourth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to adopt a Final Declaration which would have underlined the urgent commitment of the international community to halt both horizontal and vertical proliferation of arms and to begin moving towards concrete measures of disarmament. For it is not enough for some States to claim that they will not be the first to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear States while, at the same time, they are against our efforts to achieve a comprehensive test-ban treaty. The point is: nuclear weapons threaten the whole world, including the nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapons States - in short, all mankind is threatened.

The international community should also heighten its focus on such other weapons of mass destruction as chemical and biological weapons. In the aftermath of the cold war, nuclear, chemical and biological disarmament should be regarded as a matter of the highest priority. Apart from these weapons, another danger of war lies in conventional armaments. In this regard, Kenya welcomes the new agreement of 4 October 1990 - in principle between Washington and Moscow on conventional-arms reductions in Europe and now calls upon the international community to focus its

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attention on other areas in Africa and Asia and help resolve other areas of conflict.

Kenya is a developing country. It has neither any major military plans, military programmes or military interests nor any geopolitical ambitions beyond the defence of its territorial integrity. Its primary interest is to improve the well-being of its people by building a prosperous and stable society without intimidation and politico-democratic prescriptions from the so-called democratic countries.

However, Kenya is part of an increasingly interdependent world. We therefore attach great importance to developing and maintaining good relations with all countries as a vital factor for breaking down barriers of mistrust which can lead to misunderstanding and conflict. Kenya therefore commends the confidence- and security-building process under way in Europe, within the framework of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. Indeed this is a valuable lesson for us in Africa.

In this connection, my delegation wishes to commend Mr. Yasushi Akashi and the Department of Disarmament Affairs for organizing a Senior African Military and Civilian Officials Workshop on Conflict Resolution, Crisis Prevention and Confidence-Building among African States in Arusha, Tanzania, from 5 to 16 March 1990. It was in itself an important confidence-building measure of potentially lasting value.

Kenya therefore calls upon the General Assembly to pay greater attention to the promotion of confidence-building measures as an important way to reduce mistrust, prevent war and thus help limit the acquisition of arms in our continent. The meagre resources we have could then be devoted largely to national economic and social programmes as well as to joint economic development activities.

(Mr. Okeyo, Kenya)

In this connection I should like to draw the Committee's attention to a historic declaration contained in General Assembly document A/45/410: Declaration on Peace, Stability and Develipment adotped by the Conference of Heads of State and Government of the States members of the Intergovernmental Authority on Drought Development (IGADD) and issued at its first extraordinary session, held at Addis Ababa on 9 July 1990.

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The Declaration reflects a commitment at the highest level by the States of this important and sensitive subregion to launch a broad, confidence-building process aimed at preventing war and an arms race in the area, promoting the non-use of force and ensuring peace and development. It is a Declaration based on the principles and purposes of the United Nations and of the Organization of African Unity. We therefore need the support of the United Nations for its full implementation.

The Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development, comprising Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan, Uganda and Kenya, is part of the geostrategic subregion of the Horn of Africa, an area of major global importance in times of peace and war.

As the Declaration points out, the subregion

"has long been characterized by conflicts and the general lack of tranquillity". (A/45/410, p. 3)

The countries of the subregion have now taken the first step towards reversing this dangerous situation, as reflected in the commitments contained in that Declaration of the Heads of State and Government. The support of the international community, especially the United Nations, is vital for the success of this process which our countries have initiated.

Kenya believes that the best way to achieve disarmament is not to wait until arms have been developed, produced and stockpiled and then to begin disarmament negotiations, but rather to take concrete measures of peace and confidence-building to make the development, production or acquisition of arms unnecessary. Therefore, while commending the important work done by the various disarmament deliberating and negotiating bodies, as well as the Secretariat, Kenya wishes to underline the importance of supporting efforts at all levels, international, regional,

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subregional or national, to avert the emergence of an arms race and to prevent the outbreak of armed hostilities. In this regard the Secretary-General's observation in his annual report is very pertinent:

"The basic prerequisite for reductions in military outlays and weapon purchases will be a change in the political climate marked by reduction of local tensions and the peaceful settlement of disputes as well as the development of regional confidence-building measures". (A/45/1, p. 19)

Kenya continues to deplore most vehemently the tragic acts of violence and armed destabilization in other parts of our continent which result directly from the perpetuation of the heinous apartheid régime. South Africa's nuclear capability constitutes a real danger to world peace and security. Its announcement on 21 September 1987 that "it will soon join the NPT" is just an insincere manoeuvre to preserve its membership of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Kenya once again calls on South Africa to abandon the secrecy and ambiguity that have surrounded its nuclear programme for some 20 years, to accede to the Non-Proliferation Treaty without any pre-conditions whatsoever, to submit all its nuclear installations and activities to IAEA safeguards and to practise transparency in its military activities.

Kenya continues to attach particular importance to the establishment of zones of peace in various parts of the world. The concept of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace reflects the hopes and aspirations of my country as a littoral State to enhance and share in the prospects for peace and security. For more than a decade we members of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean have been struggling against the wall erected by the major naval and maritime Powers who have impeded our goal of declaring the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace. But we have not despaired because we believe strongly that if the Berlin Wall could collapse and the pillars of apartheid are on the brink of disintegration, the "wall" or impediments against

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the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace will sooner or later definitely collapse also.

The Group of Qualified Governmental Experts on the role of the United Nations in the field of verification concluded its work with a consensus report, document A/45/372. The report represents a very fragile compromise, the result of difficult negotiations during which experts with substantially different positions gave something and lost something. It is therefore important that the Group's first recommendation, that the United Nations, through the Department for Disarmament Affairs, should develop a consolidated data bank of published materials and data provided on a voluntary basis by Member States on all aspects of verification and compliance be considered as a matter of priority.

The maintenance of international peace and security is the kingpin of the United Nations Charter. In view of this my delegation hopes that the new collective strength of the United Nations, as depicted in the unprecedented spirit of partnership and co-operation in the Security Council, will be exercised and applied to all similar situations without fear or favour. Aggression is illegal regardless of the status of the perpetrator. Accordingly, if sanctions can be effective in the Gulf, they can also be effective against the racist régime in Pretoria.

In other words, this new partnership in the Security Council should be used humanely for the common good of all nations - small or big. It has to go beyond the simple question of stability in Europe. Perceptions, debt problems and the aspirations of economically weak countries have to be considered seriously.

The pursuit of global peace and security will mean little, if the rich developed countries of the North remain silent, unruffled and indifferent to the third world's blistering poverty and isolation from the streams of international wealth and prosperity.

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This indifference is manifested in the fact that since the end of the cold war and the substantial reduction in conventional arms in Europe, none of the so-called developed democratic countries has ever come up with a proposal for the establishment of an international fund through which money released from the reduction in armaments could be channelled to help to alleviate the staggering poverty in third-world countries. The best guarantee for global peace and security - about which we talk in this Organization every day - should be a firm commitment from the rich nations to invest in humanity through unreserved, unconditional assistance to the poor third-world countries. We hope that those with the wisdom to listen, will listen for the sake of humanity in the future.

I wish to conclude by wishing you, Mr. Chairman, and all representatives all the best as we move ahead in pursuit of world peace, security and development.

Mr. NGUYEN DUC HUNG (Viet Nam): I wish at the outset to express the great pleasure of my delegation at the fact that you, Sir, are presiding over the First Committee at the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly. Your well-known qualities as a diplomat, vast experience and ability guarantee the best possible outcome from the work of the Committee. My congratulations go also to other officers of the Committee.

This year has produced sweeping and extensive political and social changes throughout the world. The bilateral and multilateral negotiations on a wide spectrum of subjects generate hope that the current trend will enable the process of disarmament to proceed at a faster pace. The meeting of Heads of State or Government of non-aligned countries held at Belgrade in September 1989 and the summit meetings between the leaders of the Soviet Union and of the United States were tangible contributions to this process. We welcome the declarations that it is time to leave behind the epoch of the cold war and move on to a more secure world. All efforts to turn the 1990s into a decade of concrete arms limitation and disarmament agreements are highly commendable.

In building peace, we must abolish the tools of war, and disarmament has already made some progress. In December 1987 the Soviet Union and the United States concluded the first nuclear-disarmament agreement in history, the Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - the INF Treaty - and they are now in the process of physically destroying land-based intermediate-range nuclear missiles.

The positive dynamism of both Soviet-American and Soviet-European relations has been demonstrated most strikingly at the recent Washington summit and in the Vienna negotiations on the reduction of conventional forces in Europe. The

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unprecedented speed and intensity of the negotiating process are clear evidence that genuine political will and commitment to achieving progress produce results. There is general expectation that an agreement to reduce strategic offensive weapons by 50 per cent will soon be ready for signature. One can hardly underestimate the significance of that agreement, which will certainly stimulate other disarmament efforts.

Referring to the issue of chemical weapons, I should like to recall the Paris Conference of January 1989, which adopted a Final Declaration reaffirming the validity of the 1925 Geneva Protocol and urging a ban on the use of chemical weapons, and acceleration of the ongoing negotiations on the chemical-weapons convention. This was followed in September 1989 by the Canberra Government-Industry Conference against Chemical Weapons, which also provided a powerful political impetus towards achieving the objective of prohibiting such weapons.

We have been following with keen interest the negotiations on a convention on the complete elimination of chemical weapons. We are pleased to note the tremendous efforts that have been made towards the attainment of this objective. Deep inroads have been made in areas that were contentious and intractable. Substantial progress has been recorded on the issue of verification and, especially, on the question of challenge inspection. Political, legal and institutional matters are also being addressed.

We welcome the agreement between the Soviet Union and the United States on an 80 per cent reduction in their chemical-weapon stockpiles. This agreement has undoubtedly given an impetus to the current endeavours in the Conference on Disarmament aimed at the conclusion of a comprehensive and effectively verifiable convention that would ensure the elimination of all existing chemical weapons and

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facilities for their production and the prohibition of the further development, production, acquisition, transfer or use of chemical weapons. Viet Nam, which has suffered immensely from the scourge of chemical weapons, has taken a consistent stand for their complete prohibition and destruction and for the early conclusion of a convention to this effect, so that the world may be genuinely free of chemical weapons.

My delegation attaches high priority to the issue of nuclear tests. This item is always high on the agenda of the First Committee, yet we still lack a multilateral legal instrument that would outlaw all nuclear explosions once and for all. That a nuclear war must never be fought needed to be formalized as a multilateral commitment.

Frustration at the lack of progress on a test ban has led many States to seek amendment of the partial test-ban Treaty. This would require a dramatic change of attitude to a comprehensive test ban on the part of some depositary parties. This, unfortunately, does not seem likely at present. Unfortunately, at present, that does not seem likely.

We regret that the Fourth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons failed to achieve agreement on a final declaration, because the parties could not agree on an immediate start on negotiations to achieve a comprehensive test ban proscribing all nuclear-test explosions. The most effective action that the nuclear-weapon Powers could take to meet their obligations under article VI of the non-proliferation Treaty would be to adopt a comprehensive test ban and actually begin to reduce strategic nuclear arsenals.

The Conference on amendment of the partial test-ban Treaty, which will convene in New York next January, will serve a useful purpose by providing the opportunity for an in-depth exchange of views on testing. In our view, the amendment

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Conference, by contributing to the creation of an international consensus in favour of a comprehensive test ban, could become a milestone on the road to solution of the problem of nuclear testing. We believe that every opportunity should be taken to promote politically the cause of a comprehensive nuclear-test ban.

The greatest challenge of our time is that of ridding our planet of the vast arsenals of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. The realization that a nuclear war cannot be won and the emerging willingness to seek security at lower levels of armaments are a reflection of the changing times. The possession of nuclear weapons cannot be justified on the basis of doctrines of nuclear deterrence and the claim that nuclear weapons have maintained peace in the post-war years.

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It would indeed be an irrational world in which doomsday weapons could be seen or legitimized as a prescription. The military doctrines that prevailed during the cold war were based on a threat perception that has become all but obsolete. In this highly interrelated world, no State or group of States can claim to organize global security. No nation, large or small, can gain security at the expense of insecurity for others. Military concepts and strategies need to be scrutinized if there is to be new thinking on security policy.

The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones would make a positive contribution to regional peace, security and stability by reducing the geographical areas within which nuclear weapons could be used. It could also make a significant contribution to nuclear disarmament. Part of that contribution would be the strengthening of non-proliferation endeavours. The creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone is a nuclear-disarmament measure by means of which non-nuclear-weapon States could give a practical demonstration of their commitment to, and their pursuit of, the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

The Treaty of Tlatelolco and the Treaty of Rarotonga cover large populated areas and are similar in their essential provisions, whose aim is to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons. Despite several important dissimilarities, both Treaties have succeeded in restraining the geographical proliferation of nuclear weapons. Proposals to set up nuclear-weapon-free zones in other regions - as put forward, over the years, in the United Nations and elsewhere - include Central, Northern and Southern Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and North-East Asia. So far as South-East Asia is concerned, the members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), at their summit meeting in December 1987, emphasized that ASEAN should intensify its efforts towards the early establishment of a South-East Asia nuclear-weapon-free zone, and that consideration of all matters relating to the establishment of such a zone, including an appropriate instrument, should continue.

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In his address to the General Assembly, at its third special session devoted to disarmament, the Vietnamese Foreign Minister, Nguyen Co Thach, supported the initiative and welcomed the drafting, by the ASEAN States, of an appropriate instrument.

Countries in every region of the world are confronted with their own conflicts and problems. Every State, in its own way, can make a contribution to establishing the conditions for general disarmament.

The question of naval forces is a critical one. Naval forces are not built up, maintained or used in isolation from overall military-force structures. Their elimination should be discussed in the context of other disarmament issues, to avoid the introduction of new causes of disequilibrium. To exclude the naval component of the military might of States and alliances from the negotiating process would be to leave untouched an important aspect of the arms race, undermine the principle of undiminished security for all parties, eventually destabilize the overall military and strategic situation in the world, and retard the process of disarmament in other areas.

For centuries the conquest of space was but a dream that cropped up sporadically in theoretical debates between scientists or in the tales of writers. In the last few decades that dream has turned into reality, and today it is an enterprise that offers us many opportunities for international co-operation. It is an established fact that, many years after the beginning of the space era, United Nations activities are anchored on the concept of the exploration of outer space for the benefit and in the interests of all States.

The 1967 Treaty on outer space, which is universally considered to be the primary and most authoritative source of international law regulating State activities in outer space, remains at the heart of the legal régime governing outer

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space. However, we are carrying many problems into the 1990s. Further efforts should be made to prevent an arms race in outer space. The establishment of an international space-surveillance agency could be instrumental in verifying compliance with Treaties relevant to this matter.

It is commonplace to say that outer space is the heritage of all mankind. As it is indeed the heritage of all mankind, it must continue to be a domain for exclusively peaceful co-operation that is of benefit to all countries.

With regard to the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament, since the beginning of the Organization the combined efforts of Governments - both multilateral and bilateral efforts, particularly within the various disarmament bodies and through regional arrangements - have resulted in limited, yet significant, agreements on various arms-limitation and disarmament measures. Over the last few years the role of the United Nations has been enhanced. At present we have every ground for hoping that the United Nations will play a greater and more effective role in accelerating the process towards achieving the ultimate objective of general and complete disarmament.

In conclusion, I should like to emphasize that the 1990s will be a decade of opportunities and challenges, of hopes and dangers, all existing side by side. Despite the twists and turns on our road of advance, we are convinced that, with unremitting joint efforts by all Governments and peoples, peace can be preserved, and the prospects for mankind made bright.

Mr. ERDENECHULUUN (Mongolia): My delegation is very happy to take part in this debate on this day, which is the anniversary of the foundation of the United Nations and marks the beginning of Disarmament Week. We commend the Department for Disarmament Affairs and the NGO Committee on Disarmament for their initiative in organizing, during Disarmament Week, forums on important issues of

(Mr. Erdenechuluun, Mongolia)

military conversion and verification. These will undoubtedly help to increase public awareness of intricate issues of disarmament.

May I offer you, Mr. Chairman, the warmest congratulations of the Mongolian delegation on your well-deserved election to your high post and pledge our full co-operation with you in the discharge of your responsibilities. Our congratulations go also to the other officers of the Committee.

I should like to express our gratitude to Under-Secretary-General Yasushi Akashi for his lucid and comprehensive statement in regard to the ongoing wide-ranging activities and future endeavours of the Department for Disarmament Affairs. We appreciate greatly the excellent work that the Department for Disarmament Affairs and the Department of Political and Security Council Affairs are doing to meet successfully the ever-growing demands on them.

(Mr. Erdenechuluun, Mongolia)

The outcome of the general debates, in which an unprecedented number of officials at the highest level participated, has amply demonstrated an emerging new spirit of internationalism as well as the determination for collective action vis-à-vis the crucial issues of global concern. It gives us hope that the last decade of this millennium will indeed mark the beginning of a new era in world history. There are, we believe, grounds for such optimism.

The sweeping changes in Eastern and Central Europe, culminating in the unification of Germany, and discernible progress in the regional disarmament process seem to give rise to an entirely new pattern of security relationships in Europe. The two great Powers - the Soviet Union and the United States - are making encouraging progress in substantially reducing their strategic arsenals. Important headway has been registered in the solution of a number of entrenched regional conflicts, with the United Nations playing a key role as a world mediator and as an indispensable instrument of reconciliation. The Security Council and its permanent members have displayed rare unity in the face of an open aggression against a fellow Member of the United Nations. We hope that this unity will be something endurable that will help make this world a safer place to live in.

Speaking about the truly revolutionary changes in the world today, it would only be right to pay tribute to the architect of new thinking and perestroika, President Mikhail Gorbachev, who has so deservedly been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

In the post-cold-war era the concept of security has come to encompass all the dimensions of security. Accordingly, the scope of disarmament efforts is becoming increasingly comprehensive, and those efforts should go hand in hand with confidence-building measures bilaterally, regionally and globally. Disarmament and arms limitation measures should promote, first of all, a sense of greater security

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for all, and pave the way to creating an international environment truly conducive to tackling the problems of social and economic progress. In this connection my delegation is encouraged to discern increasing recognition of the unavoidable link between disarmament and development endeavours. We are further encouraged to find out that the question of "security conversion" or conversion of military production into civilian production has become a major subject of Soviet-American consultations. By the same token, bringing about international conditions favourable for delivering the developing countries from the arms race burden must become a major objective of practical urgency.

One of the most vital security and disarmament issues is the prevention of the proliferation of all weapons of mass destruction and the means of their delivery as well as high-technology weapons. The Fourth Review Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty has recently ended its work without reaching an agreement on a concluding document. Of course, my delegation is far from being negativistic as regards the general outcome of the Conference. We are fully cognizant that much has been accomplished during the Conference. I have in mind in particular the progress made in such areas as full-scope safeguards, security assurances and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

However, it is highly regrettable that the differences concerning the issue of a comprehensive test ban prevented the Conference from adopting its final document. It is a disquieting fact since a comprehensive test ban constitutes the core of the problem of arresting the technological nuclear arms race. It is clear from the relevant provisions of both the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the partial test-ban treaty. The continued stalemate in the negotiations on the comprehensive test ban is fraught with a danger of undermining the efficacy of the non-proliferation Treaty. There is no need to say how important it is to resolve

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expeditiously the outstanding issues, as the next NPT review conference to be held in 1995 will have to decide about its future.

As to the question of a comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty, there have been certain encouraging developments of late. The Soviet Union and the United States have ratified the 1974 and 1976 threshold Treaties and signed verification protocols to them. After years of frustrating efforts in the Conference on Disarmament, an Ad Hoc Committee has at long last been reestablished, albeit without a clear negotiating mandate.

My delegation considers it important that the Conference on Disarmament at its next session re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee without delay with an appropriate mandate that will allow it to start negotiations on this vital issue.

Mongolia is looking forward to the forthcoming amendment conference of the partial test ban Treaty to be held in January next year with the task of converting it into a comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty. We express our appreciation to the Group of Qualified Experts under the able leadership of Ambassador Theorin of Sweden for their comprehensive study on nuclear weapons, which updates an earlier study prepared 10 years ago.

Turning now to the issue of a chemical weapons ban, my delegation wishes to underscore anew the urgent need for an early conclusion of a comprehensive agreement in that regard.

We regret that regardless of the fact that much substantive work has been carried out in the Conference on Disarmament it failed to report any significant progress during the last session. In this regard we consider timely a proposal to hold in the first half of 1991 a meeting of the Conference on Disarmament at the level of foreign ministers with the aim of resolving the remaining issues still blocking the way to the conclusion of the Convention. My delegation welcomed the

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signing last June of a Soviet-American agreement on the destruction of their chemical weapons stockpiles, although it has evoked certain controversy.

As regards the Third Biological Weapons Review Conference, my delegation wishes to underscore the importance of further strengthening this multilateral instrument by universal adherence to the Convention as well as by exploring ways and means for creating a verification mechanism in the biological weapons régime.

The question of strengthening multilateral disarmament mechanisms has been rather extensively discussed in various forums. We are gratified to note that efforts in that regard have yielded some positive results. This is especially true as regards the United Nations Disarmament Commission, which this year has been able to make significant progress on a number of long-standing items on its agenda as well as to come to an agreement on the rationalization of its procedure. Discussions on streamlining have started in the Conference on Disarmament as well.

My delegation is closely following the discussions of the friends of the Chairman being held during this session of the General Assembly. We note the many interesting ideas and proposals advanced by various delegations to this effect. May I be permitted to mention here a step taken by my delegation last year concerning the item "Disarmament week", which from now on will be considered by the First Committee on a three-year basis.

In conclusion, I should like to express our high appreciation of the useful activities being carried out by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, whose tenth anniversary we commemorate this year. We also commend the work of regional centres for peace and disarmament aimed at fostering regional awareness of disarmament objectives. Noteworthy in this regard is this year's Kathmandu meeting on the security enhancing role of confidence- and security-building measures.

Mr. KAKOURIS (Cyprus): As this is the first time my delegation has spoken, allow me to convey to you, Sir, the sincere congratulations of the delegation of the Republic of Cyprus on your well-deserved election as Chairman of this Committee. It is only fitting that the work of this Committee be entrusted to you in recognition of both the respect in which you are held and the diplomatic skills you have exhibited throughout your tenure at the United Nations. In steering this Committee through its agenda, you will have my delegation's full support. May I also express my congratulations to the other members of the Bureau on their election.

(Mr. Kakouris, Cyprus)

My delegation also takes this opportunity to recognize the invaluable work of the Department for Disarmament Affairs under the expert guidence of the Under-Secretary-General for disarmament, Mr. Akashi. Our thanks and appreciation are extended to him and his staff.

At the fourty-fourth session the corridors and conference rooms of the United Nations were filled with talk both of the changes taking place in the relations between the two super-Powers and of the developments under way in eastern and central Europe. The world political landscape was changing.

There was hope in the air as well as scepticism. We all asked ourselves whether those changes were really taking place or were a mere flash in the pan. One year later, I believe we are still mesmerized both by the speed and the level of the change that has taken place. The effective ending of the cold war, the redirection of relations between the two super-Powers and their alliances from distrust to co-operation and dialogue and the historic reunification of Germany are events which were both unthinkable and, some would say, unrealistic until not so long ago. It was only fitting in this regard that the Nobel Peace Prize Committee recognized President Gorbachev for the role that he played to this end.

The rapprochement between the two super-Powers and the recognition by both that the policy of security based on high levels of nuclear weapons is untenable undoubtedly augers well for a new world order. However, it is also true to say that the euphoria which marked the last 12 months is dampened by the fact that the security of small and weak States is still as precarious as ever.

Iraq's invasion and occupation of Kuwait is a prime example of the dangers that still remain when a larger and militarily stronger Power disregards the Charter of the United Nations and the norms of international law. The crisis, however, brought to the fore a United Nations that spoke with one voice. The

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international community, through the Security Council resolutions, has stated in no uncertain terms that aggression cannot and must not be allowed to cement itself, nor should it be seen to be condoned through inaction by the international community.

If we are truly to enter a new era based on peace and prosperity, the United Nations Charter, the primacy of international law and the peaceful settlement of disputes between States must be the epicentre around which relations between States revolve. Anything short of this would be a half-measure and would be prone to reversion to the confrontational past.

The present period is marked by a flurry of activities in the disarmament field, especially at the bilateral level between the United States and the Soviet Union. We look forward to the concluding of an agreement in the strategic arms reduction talks (START) on substantial cuts in the nuclear arsenals of both super-Powers and welcome the signing of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - the INF Treaty - and see both very much as a first step towards the further reduction of nuclear stockpiles and their eventual destruction. We also recognize, however, that the momentum at the bilateral level has not been extended to the multilateral disarmament level. We urge all concerned to exploit to the fullest the multilateral negotiation forums, particularly the Conference on Disarmament.

On the conventional weapons front, my delegation welcomes the resolve shown by the Soviet Union and the United States as regards reducing conventional forces in Europe. We sincerely hope that an agreement to this end will be formalized at the Paris summit in November by the States participating in the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE). My delegation views this, too, in the light of a first step towards further reductions of conventional forces in Europe. It is

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important that there be full participation by all CSCE States in this and subsequent efforts that will shape the future landscape of Europe.

My delegation believes that the positive effects should not be confined to Europe; we hope that the ripple effect will be extended to other regions as well. In this regard, the adjacent Mediterranean region would be a logical starting point.

The Republic of Cyprus has always attached particular importance to the non-proliferation Treaty and its primary position in the attempt to limit the spread of nuclear weapons as well as in disarmament negotiations. The Fourth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) held in Geneva last month, afforded us the opportunity to advance the positive international developments in the field of disarmament. However, the Review Conference was unable to achieve a consensus on a final document. Although agreement was reached on a vast number of issues, the inability of the Review Conference to reach a consensus on the question of a comprehensive test ban could be potentially damaging to the extension Conference of 1995. My delegation believes that it is incumbent on us all to do our utmost to ensure agreement on the remaining outstanding issues and pave the way for the future extension of the Treaty beyond 1995.

We can make a start here in the First Committee by recomitting ourselves to this as well as reaffirming the relevance and importance of the non-proliferation Treaty. Today more than ever before strict adherence by both nuclear and non-nuclear parties to the provisions of the NPT is of extreme importance. We welcome the recent decision by both Mozambique and Albania to accede to the Treaty, thereby further reinforcing both its relevance and its universality.

The achievement of a comprehensive test-ban treaty must continue to remain one of the cornerstones of multilateral disarmament. The issue of nuclear tests, however, continues to be an area in which agreement has eluded us, as evidenced at

(Mr. Kakouris, Cyprus)

the Fourth Review Conference of the NPT. It is my delegation's hope that, with the recent mandate given to the Ad Hoc Committee in the Conference on Disarmament, as well as the ratification by the United States and the Soviet Union of the 1974 threshold test-ban Treaty and the 1976 Treaty on peaceful nuclear explosions, the necessary climate for meaningful negotiations leading to a comprehensive test-ban Treaty now exists.

Within this context the Conference on the amendment of the partial test-ban Treaty, to be held in 1991, affords us all the opportunity to express our commitment to ending nuclear tests. My delegation hopes that the amendment Conference will be a constructive one, in which all parties will contribute to its success.

Disarmament must not be seen purely in terms of nuclear weaponry. Having recognized the destructive nature of these weapons and the need to eliminate them, we must find the same resolve when dealing with other weapons of mass destruction, such as chemical weapons. It is therefore of priority importance that a convention on the complete prohibition of chemical weapons be concluded as soon as possible. While we recognize the agreement between the Soviet Union and the United States on the destruction and reduction of their chemical-weapon stockpiles, we note with regret that at the multilateral level the momentum that characterized the Paris negotiations in 1989 was not sustained at the Conference on Disarmament this year. It is essential that the momentum be regained and the necessary political will be exhibited by all, so that the undoubted threat that these weapons pose to international peace and security will eventually be removed. It would be remiss of my delegation not to recognize at this juncture the tremendous efforts exerted by the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons, Ambassador Hyltenius of Sweden.

(Mr. Kakouris, Cyprus)

My delegation firmly believes that the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament is vitally important. We must give it our full support in all areas. We believe that rationalization of work both in this Committee and in the Disarmament Commission, if carried out in a constructive manner, could increase the effectiveness and usefulness of the Organization in the field of disarmament.

(Mr. Kakouris, Cyprus)

All our efforts in the disarmament field and the gains resulting from those efforts will have gone to waste unless we recognize and act on the undoubted interrelationship that exists between disarmament and development. In this regard, my delegation fully shares the sentiments of previous speakers in recognizing the urgent need for the peace dividend to become reality. I should like in this context to echo the words of Ambassador Azikiwe of Nigeria, who said:

"attention must not only be focused on military threats which constitute impediments to the realization of peace and security, but also on sustained global economic development, the promotion of social justice and the protection of the environment." (A/C.1/45/PV.8, p. 28)

All eyes are firmly fixed on the United Nations and its Member States, looking to them to place on a permanent footing the positive elements of the last 12 months. This Committee can play an important part. Let us not lose the opportunity that exists to take full advantage of a reinvigorated United Nations and to shape the world of tomorrow for the benefit of all mankind.

The CHAIRMAN: We have come to the end of the list of speakers for this afternoon's meeting.

However, I have received a request from one delegation to speak in exercise of the right of reply. Before calling on that delegation, I remind representatives that the Committee will follow the procedure outlined at a previous meeting.

I now call on the representative of Israel to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. ARBELL (Israel): I deeply regret having to take the Committee's time on a subject that is neither relevant nor of particular interest to its work. I feel, however, that since the representative of Tunisia found it appropriate to waste the Committee's time in order to raise subjects with no relevance here, subjects that are already being discussed by other United Nations Committees and by

(Mr. Arbell, Israel)

the Security Council, I have no choice but to place into accurate and factual perspective one of the many fallacies in his statement. I refer to the remarks concerning the incident at the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.

Eight October was a holy day for Jews, the climax of the traditional pilgrimage to Jerusalem, which commemorates the Feast of Tabernacles. It is a day on which tens of thousands of Jews assemble at the Wailing Wall, the remnant of the temple, the holiest site of Judaism, to receive the Birkat Kohanim, the traditional benediction service.

This year on that day 30,000 worshippers crowded the plaza. The serenity of the sacrosanct occasion was suddenly shattered in an unexpected, unprovoked attack. Thousands of rocks, bricks and bottles were hurled down from the Temple Mount on to the heads of the worshippers below.

Eight October, was not a holy day for Muslims; it was an ordinary week day. Nevertheless, some 4,000 Arabs assembled on the Temple Mount in the early hours of Monday morning. Those were not only worshippers; they were a mob intent on shedding Jewish blood.

As the events of last week have shown, attacks on Jews are on the rise. In a span of three days - 21, 22 and 23 October - seven armed attacks were perpetrated on Jews, with the use of knives, bayonets, sledgehammers and axes. Three Jews were killed and seven injured as a result.

This eruption of violence is directly related to PLO efforts to incite the Palestinian population. Leaflets have been circulated by the PLO and its many factions urging its activists to stab Jews, use firearms and kill every Israeli they encounter. One leaflet that has just been published urges the deliberate provocation of Israeli security forces to draw them into conflict. The population is being called upon to assemble at the Temple Mount this Friday for another round of violence.

(Mr. Arbell, Israel)

All of us must work to calm the situation. Using the First Committee for slander is not a step in the right direction.

The CHAIRMAN: I wish to inform delegations that the First Committee will convene in a special meeting in observance of Disarmament Week tomorrow morning at 10.30 a.m. The President of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General will address the Committee.

Before adjourning the meeting, I call on the Secretary of the Committee, who wishes to make some announcements.

Mr. KHERADI (Secretary of the Committee): I should like to remind representatives that the Eighth United Nations Pledging Conference for the World Disarmament Campaign will be convened tomorrow, Thursday, 25 October, immediately following the adjournment of the meeting in observance of Disarmament Week in this conference room.

In addition, I remind the Committee that there will be an informal meeting at 3.30 tomorrow afternoon in this conference room on the ongoing negotiations concerning the draft convention on chemical weapons, a meeting to be chaired by Ambassador Hyltenius of Sweden, the current Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons in the Conference on Disarmament, who will provide a briefing on the status of the negotiations and give an opportunity for an informal exchange of views on the subject.

I also want to draw attention to the fact that immediately after this meeting there will be a meeting of the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/44/L.25, adopted by the General Assembly as resolution 44/106, on the amendment of the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water. There will also be a meeting of the African Group in the First Committee tomorrow morning at 9.30 in this conference room.

(Mr. Kheradi)

Finally, there will be a closed meeting of the open-ended group of the non-aligned members of the First Committee tomorrow, 25 October, following the adjournment of the informal meeting on chemical weapons.

The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-FIFTH SESSION

Official Records

FIRST COMMITTEE
17th meeting
held on
Thursday, 25 October 1990
at 10.30 a.m.
New York

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 17th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. RANA (Nepal)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.50 a.m.

OBSERVANCE OF DISARMAMENT WEEK

The CHAIRMAN: In keeping with a tradition initiated at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, the First Committee is holding this special meeting to observe Disarmament Week, which began on 24 October 1990.

I am pleased on this occasion to welcome to the First Committee His Excellency Mr. Guido de Marco, President of the General Assembly at the forty-fifth session. On behalf of the First Committee I should like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election and also for the skilful manner in which you are carrying out the important responsibilities which have been entrusted to you.

I am also happy to welcome to the First Committee His Excellency Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, Secretary-General of the United Nations. Your untiring efforts, Mr. Secretary-General, in promoting the purposes and principles of the United Nations and the cause of international peace have earned you the appreciation and gratitude of us all. Your timely and important initiatives in the areas of peace-keeping and peace-making in recent years have raised and renewed faith in the United Nations Charter. The United Nations is today poised to play its proper role in the shaping of an interdependent world.

The Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament proclaimed the week beginning 24 October - the day of the founding of the United Nations - as a week devoted to fostering the objectives of disarmament. At the second special session on disarmament, in 1982, the General Assembly, noting the usefulness of Disarmament Week, made it an integral part of the World Disarmament Campaign launched at that session. Governments and non-governmental organizations have been urged to make Disarmament Week the focus

(The Chairman)

of efforts to increase public awareness of the dangers of the arms race, particularly the nuclear-arms race, thereby creating an atmosphere conducive to progress in disarmament.

Recent years have raised unprecedented hopes for meaningful and sustained progress in the fields of arms control and disarmament. With the end of the cold war, we are at the threshold of a new phase of history. For the first time since the Second World War serious efforts are being made to arrest the relentless escalation of the arms race. After the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - the INF Treaty - of 1987, which, for the first time provided for actual reductions in nuclear weapons, the international community has welcomed the agreement in June 1990 between the Soviet Union and the United States on the framework of the strategic offensive arms reduction treaty and looks forward to an early conclusion of the agreement and its implementation. There is, of course, a long way to go. The process will have to cover all types of nuclear weapons, incorporating eventually those of the other nuclear-weapon States. But the prospects for sustained progress are indeed positive.

All of us feel greatly encouraged by the progress in the negotiations on the reductions of conventional forces in Europe (CFE). It is the hope of the international community that the conclusion of a CFE agreement and the summit meeting of the 34-nation Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), to be held in Paris from 19 to 21 November, will mark the beginning of a new era and system of security in Europe. We also hope that a CFE agreement will provide momentum towards further reductions in conventional arms and forces. Progress in conventional disarmament in Europe also calls for effective measures to curb the transfer of surplus weapons to other parts of the world.

(The Chairman)

Elsewhere there has been progress in promoting confidence in Central America through the Esquipulas process, which is to include, inter alia, the establishment of inventories of weapons and machinery and a system of monitoring and verification. The laudable achievements of the CSCE process and the encouraging progress in Central America underline the importance of a regional approach to matters of confidence-building and security. These positive trends deserve to be emulated in other parts of the world.

Equitable economic relations based on co-operation between industrialized and developing countries alone can provide a lasting framework for peace. Access to modern science and technology is crucial for the development of the developing countries.

(The Chairman)

At the same time the world community ought to focus greater attention on the elaboration of modalities for conversion of military economies to civilian economies. International co-operation in the area of conversion could assist in the adjustment process. It is hoped that the peace dividend could be invested for social and economic development, in particular of the developing countries.

The dramatic developments in bilateral and some regional arms limitations efforts have not, however, adequately permeated the multilateral disarmament process. The opportunity provided by the new climate of international relations must be seized to extend disarmament efforts beyond the nuclear and conventional arsenals of the great Powers and their allies. Disarmament, to be meaningful, has to be the joint effort of all nations. The United Nations provides an irreplaceable forum for this endeavour. As the Secretary-General has said in his report on the work of the Organization:

> "The turn for the better in the field of arms limitation provides an impetus and a fresh sense of purpose to the disarmament machinery within the framework of the Organization." (A/45/1, p. 20)

The celebration of Disarmament Week can be an important instrument in building up strong public opinion in favour of strengthening the multilateral bodies that deal with arms limitation and disarmament issues.

I now have the pleasure to call upon the President of the General Assembly, Mr. Guido de Marco, to address the First Committee.

Mr. de MARCO (President of the General Assembly): Mr. Chairman, in the first place, may I thank you for your very kind words on my election as President of the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly. The Assembly work also depends much on the work that the Committees of the General Assembly provide. There is such a definite not linkage but almost identity between the work of the Committees

(The President of the General Assembly)

and the work of the General Assembly, and for this I have even more to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your great co-operation and the valuable advice you have given me since my election to the presidency of the General Assembly.

The year 1978 was the year that the General Assembly proclaimed Disarmament Week as "a week devoted to fostering the objectives of disarmament".

By doing so, the Assembly highlighted the concern of the international community over the dangers of a spiralling arms race. It acknowledged the urgent need to mobilize world public opinion

> "in order to create an international atmosphere conducive to the implementation of further practical measures with regard to the cessation of the arms race and disarmament". (General Assembly resolution 33/71 D)

The importance of the resolution is twofold. It expresses the General Assembly's conviction that peace and security can be sought - and obtained - at progressively lower levels of armaments. It underscores the need to involve world public opinion on the issue.

In the ensuing 12 years, Disarmament Week was observed against the alternating backdrop of hope and frustration. Progress in disarmament was often elusive, but efforts continued to edge it slowly, yet steadily, forward. Notwithstanding the tension and turbulence that at times seemed to paralyse such efforts, the international community always persevered with determination and patience.

Over the last 12 months, international relations have undergone tremendous change in several key areas. The world community has witnessed the end of the cold war and the emergence of a super-Power partnership. The cruel East-West confrontation has been replaced by fruitful East-West co-operation. A generation of mutual trust has culminated in the dismantling of barriers and the unification

(The President of the General Assembly)

of Germany within the framework of a more secure Europe. The process of democratization is also leaving its mark in other regions in Central and South America, Africa and Asia.

All these changes increase expectations. Their positive impact on arms limitation and disarmament is already evident. The recent breakthrough in the United States-Soviet negotiations on reducing conventional forces in Europe is a case in point. It is expected that a conventional arms agreement will be ready for signature before the next summit of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) in November this year. The dawning of a new security system in Europe is imminent.

It is my fervent hope that the progress achieved so far will be matched in other ongoing multilateral efforts towards disarmament, in particular the early conclusion of a chemical weapons convention.

Just as we are heartened by these positive developments, we are faced with a new regional conflict that threatens to destabilize global security and jeopardize the lives and well-being of millions of innocent people.

The events in the Gulf region are a vivid and painful example of the explosive nature of regional conflicts and their spill-over effects on global stability. As super-Power confrontation recedes and the halting and reversal of the nuclear-arms race become a reality, it has become obvious that an effort which parallels that which in the past mobilized world public opinion on the danger of the nuclear-arms race must be undertaken to halt and reverse the stockpiling of conventional arms and weaponry on a regional level.

Regional conflicts have sown death and misery among millions. There is an urgent need to resolve such conflicts - open or simmering - not by means of force,

(The President of the General Assembly)

but through the building of trust and confidence among nations. In this respect, the success of the CSCE process should be considered as a model for other regions of the world.

The firm, unanimous response of the international community to the invasion and annexation of Kuwait underlines the vital role of the United Nations in the peaceful resolution of conflicts. In a growingly interdependent world community, the relevance of the United Nations in bringing nations together to tackle problems in the political, economic, social and environmental spheres has come into sharper focus.

(The President of the General Assembly)

The same need for common action holds true for disarmament. Bilateral arms control negotiations must be complemented by multilateral and multifaceted efforts. In this respect, the United Nations has a pivotal role in all relevant areas, including confidence- and security-building, arms transfers, conversion and verification.

At the recent World Summit for Children we were reminded of our grave responsibility to our children and to coming generations. They are entitled to a safe and peaceful world, a world that is not plagued by poverty, burdened by debt or endangered by a deteriorating physical environment; a world that is free from the scourge of drug-trafficking, free from terrorism, and free from violations of human rights. Above all, children are entitled to a world that is free from armaments and from the threat of war.

A step forward in disarmament is a step forward in the survival of mankind.

The Romans believed in the principle si vis pacem para bellum - if you wish for peace, prepare for war. This principle has been subjected to great criticism, and, in my view quite rightly, because it justifies the arms-race escalation which is only a step short of war. Many have changed the Roman principle into "si vis pacem para pacem" - if you wish for peace prepare for peace.

But one should distinguish between pacifism and preparing for peace. Preparing for peace involves not only a forma mentis regarding peace but also, in some instances, that peace itself be defended. One has to find a just balance between optimism and pessimism, linking idealism with a realistic approach in any situation.

Precisely because of this reality, taking a meaningful step towards disarmament is not easy. It requires a spirit of pragmatism and compromise, a

(The President of the General Assembly)

willingness to confront the substantive issues and address specific issues that stand in the way of progress. It requires a commitment to a new philosophy, the philosophy that was so well articulated in the preamble to the General Assembly resolution in December 1978, wherein it is stated that:

> "the old concept of armed national security to which the peoples of the world are conditioned has become obsolete [and] is giving way to new concepts ... that ... require the full partnership of peoples". (resolution 33/71 N).

This is the spirit in which I believe Disarmament Week should be observed.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the President of the General Assembly, Mr. Guido de Marco, for his kind words and his very thoughtful statement.

I have pleasure in calling now on the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: First, Mr. Chairman, I should like to thank you for the very generous and encouraging words you have addressed to me.

The annual observance of Disarmament Week provides an opportunity to take stock of our efforts to promote the cause of arms limitation and disarmament. This year, I am addressing the First Committee at a time when signs of progress are more hopeful than ever in the past, though the shadow of regional conflict darkens an otherwise bright picture.

The fears and assumptions which brought about the creation of two major military blocs are now seen as the features of a confrontational past. A saner concept of security is taking hold, at least on the global level. As a result, the arms spiral is not only being halted but beginning to be reversed. The Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - INF Treaty -

(The Secretary-General)

was a first step, which I hope will soon be followed by an agreement in Europe on drastic reductions of conventional armaments and military capabilities and by the expected agreement between the Soviet Union and the United States on substantial cuts in strategic offensive arms.

Yet enthusiasm at this turn of events must be tempered by a sober assessment of the tasks before us. The issue of nuclear weapons and their continued testing remains a divisive one, as the recent Fourth Review Conference on the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty has shown. While the need to strengthen the Treaty has not been questioned, it is of paramount importance that a viable régime for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons extending beyond 1995 be agreed upon by the international community. It is my hope that the widespread community of views existing on this issue will be extended to the thorny question of the cessation of nuclear testing. I have repeatedly underlined the desirability of a comprehensive test-ban treaty and I urge that all sides seek to make progress on this sensitive and heretofore intractable question.

The high priority of nuclear disarmament notwithstanding, other weapons of mass destruction continue to be a cause of deep and widespread anxiety. The proliferation of chemical weapons is an alarming development and the appalling danger of their actual use in conflict has in fact increased. This spectre alone should encourage States to remove the remaining obstacles and speedily conclude the chemical-weapons convention that is being negotiated in the Conference on Disarmament at Geneva. The firm political will that has led to agreements in other areas needs to be mustered to rid the world at long last of the scourge of chemical weapons.

Substantial progress in conventional arms limitation and disarmament is being made on the European continent, and it is gratifying to witness this development in

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what has been regarded traditionally as the most heavily armed region of the world. The significance of this process goes beyond the sheer numbers of arms and armed forces involved. Entirely new security arrangements are being shaped as mutual confidence replaces suspicion and fear. However, this constructive change has yet to be extended to other regions. Only when the new appreciation of collective security becomes more firmly rooted world wide shall we be able to claim that a new international order has come into being.

Recent developments have clearly shown that aggression and the resort to force in international relations are not acceptable to the international community. It is to be hoped that the sense of shared responsibility reflected in the firm response of the Security Council, in accordance with the Charter, will also be demonstrated by a progressive dismantling of the world's huge stockpiles of weapons - nuclear, chemical and conventional. The efforts currently being made to tackle the issues of conversion and redirecting military capabilities to civilian purposes are healthy signs of the new sense of direction. I welcome the initiatives put forward and the proposals made in this respect and trust that they will be taken up energetically by the international community.

The turn for the better in the field of arms limitation and disarmament should lead us to redouble our efforts on behalf of peace. The responsibility for building a safer future is a universal one and I should like to pay a tribute on this occasion to the commitment of non-governmental organizations around the world. They have been selfless and persuasive champions of the cause of disarmament, and they have heightened public awareness of our objectives. They deserve our support and co-operation. A rare opportunity to alter the equation of

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international peace and security is now within reach. Much depends on our grasping it. After more than a generation of confrontation, expectations are high, and we cannot afford to disappoint them.

The CHAIRMAN: On behalf of the First Committee, I wish to thank the Secretary-General for his very thoughtful statement.

The First Committee has thus concluded its meeting devoted to observance of Disarmament Week.

The meeting rose at 11.20 a.m.